

Pharmacy Career Pathway – Pharmacy Assistants



Step 1

Assistant Technical Officer (ATOs)

Gain a level 2 qualification (12 months duration) while you work. Completion of competencies in dispensing accuracy and controlled drugs dispensing.

Specialise in dispensary, ward based services, technical services, provision and procurement.

Band 2 with possible progression afterwards.

Opportunities to undertake further training after 2 years dispensing experience to become an Accuracy Checking Dispensing Assistant.

Step 2

Senior ATO

Following completion of the Level 2 qualification and satisfactory sign off of competencies, possible opportunities to progress to a Band 3 Senior ATO role.

Specific ATO roles have progression development built in from Band 2 ATO to Band 3 SATO. Following completion of your qualification and satisfactory competency sign off.

Other Senior ATO roles can be applied for as they become available.

Senior ATOs take on further responsibilities depending on their area of work, but will be expected to help coach less experienced staff and help manage their teams workload.

Senior ATOs tend to go onto become either Student Technician (see Technician pathway), or for those who do not want to undergo the 2 year course, opportunities available to progress into supervisory and managerial roles.

Step 3

Lead ATO

Experienced ATOs may have the opportunity to advance into supervisory positions.

This is a role that we hope to develop and expand the workforce, in order to allow a structured progression pathway for ATO's, and to facilitate the rapid growth of the pharmacy team within WVT.

Lead ATOs manage their teams, helping in recruitment and training, as well as monitoring workflow and assigning tasks.

Unlike Pharmacy Technicians, Lead ATOs are not registered professionals, but they do follow and help to re-enforce our high standards.

Our Dispensary Lead ATOs are expected to be Accuracy Checking Dispensing Assistants, but this training will be completed on the job.

There will be opportunities at this level to complete nationally recognised Team Leader/Supervisor training including ILM Level 3.

Step 4

Band 5 - Management

The most recent development of our non-registered workforce is the development of opportunities in pharmacy management.

Our managers are responsible for the operational rather than clinical duties in pharmacy. They build and manage their teams, and develop systems in order to improve our service.

They contribute to the generation and implementation of ideas to improve efficacy and efficiency and monitor and report Key Performance Indicators.

The development of these roles reflect the growth in pharmacy and the desire to train and retain the best people.

As the workforce continues to grow so does the possibility of more management roles.

Band 5 management roles are currently the highest available position for non-registered pharmacy staff within WVT, but in future this could change. Experience in these roles can provide a platform to take on managerial roles elsewhere in WVT, where there are many opportunities for further development.

Pharmacy Career Pathway – Pharmacy Technicians

Pharmacy support staff sometimes go onto university to gain their MPharm degree to qualify as a Pharmacist – some additional qualifications may be required – check with individual organisations before applying.



Step 1

Assistant Technical Officer (ATOs)

Duration: 12 month (fixed term contract)

Entry Level Requirements: 3 GCSE's including one Science, Maths and English Grade C/4 or above

Gain a level 2 qualification while you work. Completion of competencies in dispensing accuracy and controlled drugs dispensing.

Specialise in dispensary, ward based services, technical services, provision and procurement.

Subject to satisfactory completion of training you will have access to permanent vacancies within the department and possible progression.

Opportunities to undertake further training after 2 years dispensing experience to become an Accuracy Checking Dispensing Assistant.

Step 2

Student Pharmacy Technician

Duration: 24 months (fixed term contract).

Gain a Level 3 qualification while you work – rotate between dispensary, ward based services, technical services and provision and procurement.

Completion of competencies in dispensing accuracy and controlled drugs dispensing if not already completed.

Opportunities to undertake further training to become an Accuracy Checking Pharmacy Technician upon registration with the GPhC after completion of above competencies.

Allocated study time.

Paid at 70% of a Band 4 in Year 1 of qualification and 75% of Band 4 in Year 2 of qualification.

Step 3

Band 4 - Rotational Pharmacy Technician

Upon successful completion of student pharmacy technician course and registration with the General Pharmaceutical Council.

Rotation around 3 areas of hospital pharmacy; dispensary, ward based medicines optimisation and technical services.

Completion of competencies in dispensing accuracy and controlled drugs dispensing if not already completed.

Opportunities to undertake further training to become an Accuracy Checking Pharmacy Technician after completion of above competencies.

Supporting the Medicines Safety Team in pharmacy with the completion of audits; controlled drug, fridge and medicines storage audits.

Band 5 - Senior Pharmacy Technician

Specialising in an area of pharmacy after a period of qualification and registration as a pharmacy technician.

Completion of competencies in dispensing accuracy, controlled drugs dispensing and attainment of ACPT qualification if not already completed.

Some line management and training responsibilities.

Step 4

Band 6 - Lead Pharmacy Technician

Taking professional responsibility and leading in your specialist area – you will work with your senior pharmacist on projects and subjects affecting your specialism.

A certain amount of operational work is also expected.

Completion of competencies in dispensing accuracy, controlled drugs dispensing and attainment of ACPT qualification if not already completed.

Being a professional role model

Additional training may be undertaken which includes the Level 4 clinical diploma in pharmacy and the ILM Level 5 management course. Additional 'in house' training courses run by the trust area available to support development.

Clinical pharmacy technicians – working closely with senior pharmacists for this speciality (medical, surgical, frailty, front of house), to provide a comprehensive service to that speciality.

Pharmacy Career Pathway – Pharmacists



Step 1

Trainee Pharmacist (Band 5)

Complete the GPhC required foundation training year over 12 months. Completion of Learning Outcomes and local competencies to support safe and effective medicines management.

Introduction to dispensary, ward based services, technical services, medicines information, and provision and procurement.

Study days offered by Health Education England, Midlands to engage with other trainees in the region.

Recruitment via the Oriel system. Trainees must have a mPharm degree.

Step 2

Clinical Pharmacist (Band 6/7)

Rotate between dispensary, ward based services, technical services and medicines information. Contribution to on call service.

Undertake university studies to complete clinical diploma in secondary care (2 year course) leading to a progression to Band 7 after completion of Year One. Opportunity to undertake Independent Prescribing in Year Two.

Contributions to patient care increase throughout role and can include analysis of drug spend, investigating patient safety incidents, writing/reviewing medicines related guidelines. All activities can contribute to diploma studies.

Registration with the GPhC and maintenance of CPD.

Step 3

Senior Pharmacist (Band 8a)

Senior Pharmacists work within a clinical specialty to ensure appropriate operational standards are maintained. This may include drug spend review, writing/updating guidelines and maintaining SOPs.

Liaise with relevant stakeholders within the specialty to promote the safe and effective use of medicines. Keep up-to-date with most recent practice and implement any relevant changes within the specialty.

Independent prescribing qualification to be undertaken. Band 8a pharmacists should have a diploma or sufficient relevant experience.

Support fellow senior colleagues to ensure the operational standards of the pharmacy department are maintained and progressed for an efficient, dynamic department.

Professional role model.
Line management and leadership duties.
Registration with the GPhC and maintenance of CPD.

Step 4

Lead Pharmacist (Band 8b)

Lead of a clinical area or specialty. Oversee the operational management of the pharmacy workforce within the specialty.

Lead pharmacists should undertake or have qualifications in leadership and management such as the Mary Seacole or ILM. They should also have experience in management and leadership roles.

Member of the Pharmacy Board, ensuring the safe, effective and efficient running of the pharmacy department.

Collaborate with senior members of the wider multidisciplinary team to ensure the pharmacy agenda is promoted within the clinical specialty.

Professional role model.
Line management and leadership duties. Registration with the GPhC and maintenance of CPD.

Step 5

Deputy Chief Pharmacist (Band 8c)

Day to day head of pharmacy department. Requires extensive experience of hospital pharmacy. At least 10 years post registration. Collaborates with other service leads within and external to the hospital.

Chief Pharmacist (Band 8d-9)

Lead of the pharmacy department and medicines use across the hospital. Liaises with professional bodies such as the CQC and GPhC to ensure the pharmacy meets standards.

Works with Medical, Nursing and other Trust Executives to provide assurance on safe use of medicines to Trust Board

Creates extensive networks with other Chief Pharmacists to improve services.